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PP RUEHQU
DE RUEHPU #0515/01 0741827
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 151827Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5617
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1465
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1288
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0749
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1163

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000515

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [SMIG](#) [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: POSTCARD FROM CAP HAITIEN

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 512
[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 477

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[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Cap Haitien, on the north coast of Haiti, is the country's second largest city with a population of roughly 100,000. Local residents and officials downplay the city's insecurity problems, but cite lack of infrastructure and basic social services, such as garbage collection, as major issues. The Haitian Coast Guard and MINUSTAH are working together to combat illegal migration and narcotics trafficking. Many people are looking to tourism to revitalize the area. While Cap Haitien has some potential, in the short and medium term it faces enormous challenges. End summary.

A View from City Hall

[1](#)2. (U) Outgoing mayor Aspile Fleurant, appointed to the position by the IGoH, is a strong USG supporter. On March 1, Fleurant specifically pointed to Poloff the success of USAID projects including electricity, roads, and garbage pick-up. Per Fleurant, the biggest problems in Cap Haitien are environmental clean-up and sanitation, which impedes the city's potential tourist industry. He hopes that the international community will be able to help, given the local government's very limited budget. With regard to decentralization, Fleurant stated that it was ''merely theoretical'' and ''impossible'' because government officials always put their personal interests above those of the nation. He was not impressed with civil society in Cap Haitien and stated that other than a few groups such as AFASDA (see para 3) and the Transportation Workers of the North, the sector is not very active. Fleurant did not think security was a major issue in the city, and cited strong working relationships with local Haitian National Police (HNP), port authorities, and MINUSTAH. He claimed to not have an opinion on the incoming mayor, Michel Saint Croix (ref A). (Comment: During the meeting, the mayor was distracted by both the incident at the port (ref B) and the pending return by the U.S. Coast Guard of the bodies of five Haitians lost at sea. End comment.)

Police and Security

13. (U) Joany Caneus has been the departmental director of the HNP for the north (DDN in French) since November 15, 2006, and has been in the HNP since 1996. In a conversation with Poloff on March 1, he stated that since he took the position of DDN the HNP has arrested ten kidnappers and seized eight firearms. He generalized that the security situation in the north is not bad, but he is concerned that gang members who have been chased out of Cite Soleil by MINUSTAH will migrate to Cap Haitien and resume their activity. He also lamented that the justice system in the north is very weak.

Coast Guard

14. (U) On March 2 Poloff met with Haitian Coast Guard (HGC) officials and their UNPOL advisors on March 2. They stated that the recently renovated base in Cap Haitien is strategically important for the prevention of both illegal migration and narcotics trafficking. (Note: In 2004, rebels attacked the HGC base in Cap Haitien, destroying most of the building and its infrastructure. End note.) During the last six months of 2006, HGC independently intercepted and returned over 900 Haitian migrants and confiscated 7 vessels involved in these clandestine events. (Note: Typically, the USG repatriates approximately 3500 Haitian migrants annually, according to CGLO. End note.) While keeping a watchful eye on migrant smuggling trends in the northern region of Haiti, the HGC also foresees increased counter narcotics operations that require more resources. In an effort to screen suspicious vessels, HGC officials will visit, board, and

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grant final departure clearance to every commercial vessel from the port of Cap Haitien. Lastly, HGC routinely participates with partner agencies - the National Port Authority, HNP, Immigration, Customs, SEMANAH (Maritime and Navigation Service), UN Police and UN Military officials - in meetings to address issues related to port operations and maritime security.

Civil Society

15. (U) Poloff met with a small group of Cap Haitien civil society members, including Association of Women in the Sun of Haiti (AFASDA), the Cap Haitien Citizen's Initiative, the Northern Democratic Platform and the Institute of Research for Economic Freedom and Prosperity (IRLET) on March 2. The conversation centered mainly on national issues, with participants often citing that Haiti's problems needed to be dealt with on a national and, more importantly, international level. When the attendees did speak specifically about Cap Haitien, one of the major problems they noted was that all of the resources, both human and financial, are concentrated in Port-au-Prince. As in the rest of the country, Cap Haitien is absorbing more and more people as the rural exodus progresses, and the population of the city has tripled in the last ten years. They agreed that Cap Haitien needs jobs and an industrial park, and that the area would be wonderful for tourism. However it needs outside investment to create the viable infrastructure necessary to support it. One of the biggest holes in infrastructure is the airport, which is too small and needs to be expanded to absorb more domestic and international flights. When speaking about the work of GoH ministries in the north, the prevalent theme was that nothing is happening at the central level, which means that there is no possibility for any activity to filter down to the lower levels. One attendee described the process of

decentralization as ''just transferring corruption and incompetence from the central to the local government.''

Tourism

¶6. (U) Minister of Tourism Patrick Delatour sees a lot of potential for tourism in the north, home to the historic Citadel and Sans Souci Palace as well as the pristine private beach of Labadie. In a meeting with USAID and Poloff on March 1, he outlined his plan for development in the area. He said that the north has potential for 11,000 hotel rooms and he is interested in the creation of a guarantee fund within the International Finance Corporation for attracting investment in medium and small hotels. He also views the diaspora as a funding source. Tourists are progressively moving west from the Dominican Republic, with the road financed by the EU between Cap Haitien and Ouanaminthe (scheduled for completion in 2008) facilitating this movement. Other roads need to be developed too, such as the one between Labadie and the Citadel, allowing tourists from the cruise ships that dock regularly at Labadie to visit the Citadel as well. The Minister accompanied Royal Caribbean to Washington recently to solicit financing (25 million USD) for the construction of a pier at Labadie so that the site can host more ships from other cruise lines. Delatour also envisions bringing tourists from Labadie to downtown Cap Haitien via boat once Cap is restored to its historic grandeur; as well as developing the Fort Liberte/Plantation Dauphin area to the east.

¶7. (U) Comment: Cap Haitien shows promise, but it lacks infrastructure and the local government finds it difficult to offer basic social services to the population. The city not only needs development, but also citizens need to accept responsibility for their own fate instead of criticizing the central government and international community for never doing enough. Though officials tried to downplay security problems, it is clear that gang activity and drug-trafficking are still matters of concern, albeit not on the same scale as in the capital and some other major cities like Gonaives.

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The improving strength of the Haitian Coast Guard is encouraging as Haiti seeks to have a greater impact in counter-narcotics efforts. Additionally, the north coast is beautiful and the potential for tourism is obvious. The local government must continue looking for ways to exploit their tourist resources, while at the same time, the business community must engage fully to create a better atmosphere for investment.
SANDERSON